United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Office of Public Affairs
Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3590

Illinois Indiana
Michigan Minnesota
Ohio Wisconsin

U.S. EPA Begins Cleanup At Baker Wood Creosoting Site

Marion, Ohio April 1999

This fact sheet:

- **describes background information.**
- **explains site risks.**
- **details how site contamination will be addressed.**
- **lists sources for additional information.**

INTRODUCTION

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has begun a cleanup at the Baker Wood Creosoting Site in Marion, Ohio. This cleanup will include excavation and off-site disposal of creosote-contaminated waste and heavily contaminated soil that may be moving underground to the nearby Little Scioto River. Other future on-site activities will include test "trenching" to identify other potential contaminated areas and a determination of the extent of sediment contamination as a result of past creosote disposal practices.

SITE BACKGROUND

The Baker Wood site is located at the northwest corner of Holland Road and Kenton Street (State Route 309) in Marion, Ohio. It is about one-half mile northwest of downtown Marion. While most of the immediate area is used for commercial and agricultural purposes, there are homes east and north of the site.

The Baker Wood Preserving Company used the property to treat wood products from the 1890s to the 1960s. Historical information indicates that the process used was for treating railroad ties and other wood products in pressure vessels. The preservatives used were most likely creosote, petroleum and other solvents. It is believed that chemical waste was discharged directly from the site to the combined sewers that drain to North Rockswale Ditch and the Little Scioto River, west of the site.

Ohio EPAasked U.S. EPAto get involved in Spring 1998 to do potential "time-critical" cleanup activities for creosote-contaminated waste at or near the ground's surface . Over the past year, U.S. EPA, in cooperation with Ohio EPA, has made site visits, conducted a geophysical survey and planned a course of action for addressing contamination. Results from the survey showed that contamination exists near an area where many process tanks were formerly located. Also, it appears that the highest contamination is probably 1 to 4 feet below the ground's surface. It is also estimated that about 2,000 cubic yards (approximately 50 truckloads) of waste or highly contaminated soil are present.

SUMMARY OF SITE RISKS

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are present at high levels and are threats to people walking on site. In their current condition, they are not dangerous to those living or conducting business nearby. VOCs are chemicals that evaporate readily in the air. Examples of VOCs are solvents, paints, thinners, degreasers and fuels. PAHs are pollutants typically associated with petroleum products or motor oils. PAHs are often present in creosote.

Creosote is a heavy, oily liquid used chiefly as a preservative. Its vapors are strong irritants. People can have short-term exposure due to touching contaminated soil and sediment or inhaling contaminated vapors at close-up range. Creosote can cause burning, itching, eye injuries or skin inflammation and discoloration. Suspected cancer-causing agents such as

PAHs are often present in creosote. The site's hazards may also affect animals living in the wooded portions of the site. U.S. EPA is concerned about easy access to the site because it is not fenced and because it is in a mixed industrial/rural/residential area.

Potential drinking-water contamination is also a concern because the Little Scioto River is a tributary to the Scioto, Olentangy and Ohio Rivers—all of which are major waterways used for drinking-water supplies.

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS

Through mid-May, U.S. EPAwill take these steps to alleviate potential and actual threats to people and the environment:

- Install a chain-link fence around critical waste-containing areas of the site;
- Establish site trailers, one of which will serve as a temporary office;
- Develop a site health and safety plan;
- Excavate, treat (or cleanse), transport and dispose of creosote and heavily contaminated soil;
- Monitor the air along the edges of the site to ensure that VOCs are not moving toward homes and businesses during soil excavation;
- Backfill and restore the excavated areas;
- Conduct tests to determine the extent of subsurface, on-site contamination;
- Determine the extent of contamination in the Little Scioto River; and
- Evaluate options for removing heavily contaminated river sediment.

While U.S. EPA and its contractors are on site, residents may notice increased truck traffic along Holland Road and Kenton Street. Also, workers will be wearing protective clothing and respirators as they use heavy equipment to excavate soil. U.S. EPA will keep the community informed if additional cleanup of river sediment or lower-level contamination on site is warranted.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions about the Baker Wood Creosoting Site or would like to be added to the site mailing list, please contact:

Susan Pastor
Community Involvement Coordinator
U.S. EPA (P-19J)
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 353-1325
1-800-621-8431
pastor.susan@epa.gov

Mark Durno
On-Scene Coordinator
U.S. EPA (ME-W)
25089 Center Ridge Road
Westlake, OH 44145
(216) 522-7260
durno.mark@epa.gov

As reports are developed in relation to the cleanup, they will be placed in an Administrative Record file at the Marion Public Library, 445 East Church Street, Marion. An administrative record typically contains detailed information upon which cleanup decisions are based.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5
Office of Public Affairs
77 West Jackson Boulevard (P-19)
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Address Correction Requested